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Open houses set on 2nd freeway

Preliminary work could speed up Reliever Project

Brent Whiting

The Arizona Republic

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Transportation planners will hold two meetings this month on a proposed second freeway in the Southwest Valley to relieve congestion on Interstate 10.

The I-10 Reliever Project, also known as Arizona 801, will be the topic of open houses in Tolleson and Avondale.

The meetings mark a continuing effort to get the project launched, said Ian Satter, a spokesman for the Arizona Department of Transportation.

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Similar "scoping" sessions were held last fall in Goodyear and Tolleson, Satter said.

The proposed reliever is a separate project from ongoing efforts by Southwest Valley leaders to get I-10 widened, Satter added.

At issue in the reliever plan are proposed freeway improvements under Proposition 400, the 2006-26 Regional Transportation Plan that Valley voters approved in November 2004.

The reliever is identified in the plan as SR 801.

Construction isn't expected to start until 2021, but completion of the preliminary work will clear the way for the leaders, should they so desire, to try to advance the freeway timetable.

Leaders view the proposed reliever as a solution to congestion for commuters. It would take many cars, and far more trucks, off I-10.

Starting from the west, it would route them from a future length of Loop 303, south of I-10, and then east to 51st Avenue, a 17-mile stretch of road.

There, the proposed six-lane reliever is expected to hook up with the future Loop 202 that is proposed for a route south of South Mountain, providing a link between the Southeast and the Southwest Valley.

It's one of several proposed projects to improve traffic flows in the West Valley.